

## Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-13 AF-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 RSR-01

/115 W

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O R 151324Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4358

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 2945

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA

SUBJECT: ARAFAT IS INTRODUCED TO DIPLOMATIC CORPS

SUMMARY: UNEXPECTED AND UNWELCOME GUEST LAST EVENING  
AT KING'S DINNER FOR RULER OF BAHRAIN WAS YASSER ARAFAT,  
WHO APPEARED IN SALON WITH KING AND SHEIKH ISSA JUST AS  
PROTOCOL OFFICER FORMING UP DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND OTHER  
GUESTS IN LINE TO BE INTRODUCED. AMBASSADORS, CHARGES  
AND OTHERS WENT THROUGH LINE AS SAUDIS HAD ARRANGED IT RAHTER  
THAN CREATE INCIDENT BY TURNING AWAY FROM KING, WHO HAD ARAFAT  
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WITH HIM IN RECEIVING LINE. SWISS, TURKISH AMBASSADORS AND DUTCH  
CONSUL ALSO CONSIDERABLY DISTURBED. SINCE NO ONE KNEW ARAFAT  
COMING, FELT WE HAD TO DEGREE BEEN TRICKED. AMB PROPOSES CALL  
ON DEPUTY FONMIN POINT OUT THAT WHILE CHIEFS OF MISSIONS HAVE

OBLIGATION RESPOND FOR ANY OCCASION TO WHICH CHIEF OF STATE REQUESTS THEIR PRESENCE, AT SAME TIME THEY HAVE RIGHT KNOW AHEAD OF TIME WHO IS COMING AND TO SEND REGRETS AND EXPLANATION IF THEY BELIEVE THEY MIGHT BE EMBARRASSED BY CIRCUMSTANCES. WE WISH MAKE SAUDIS AWARE WE BELIEVE SERIOUS BREACH OF COURTESY WAS MADE. END SUMMARY.

1. UNPLEASANT INCIDENT OCCURRED LAST NIGHT AT KING'S DINNER FOR RULER OF BAHRAIN. BEFORE DINNER DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS AND PROMINENT CITIZENS WERE ASSEMBLED IN LARGE RECEPTION HALL ADJOINING DINING ROOM OF PLACE. CHIEF OF PROTOCOL HAD DIPLOMATIC CORPS PARTIALLY LINED UP TO PASS BY KING AND BE GREETED BY HIM AND SKEIKH ISSA. AS KING AND ISSA THEN ENTERED RECEPTION HALL WE NOTICIED ANOTHER MILITARY FIGURE PRESENT WHO TURNED OUT TO BE NONE OTHER THAN YASSER ARAFAT, WHO WAS PLACED IN RECEPTION LINE ALONG SIDE BAHRAINI RULER. I MADE SPLIT SECOND DECISION PROCEED WITH INTRODUCTIONS AS SAUDIS HAD SET THEM UP, AS DID ALL OTHER AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES, IN ORDER TO AVOID CREATING INCIDENT IN PRESENCE KING AND OTHER SENIOR MEMBERS ROYAL FAMILY. SHEIKH ISSA LOOKED CONSIDERABLY DISCOMFITTED. AFTER INTRODUCTIONS WE WERE TAKEN DIRECTLY INTO DINING ROOM. ARAFAT HAD ONLY FEW MINUTES BEFORE DINNER ARRIVED FROM VISIT TO KUWAIT.

2. USUALLY WHEN MEAL IS COMPLETED AT SUCH AFFAIRS THERE IS EXCHANGE OF COMPLIMENTARY SPEECHES BETWEEN KING AND HONORED GUEST AND OFTEN COURT POET DELIVERS THETORICAL PRIASE OF KING AND HIS GUEST. LAST EVENING KING, ALONG WITH SHEIKH ISSA, ARAFAT, CROWN PRINCE, DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS (TUNISIAN), BAHRAIN FON-MINISTER, AND OTHERS, AROSE IMMEDIATELY FGOM HEAD TABLE AFTER LAST COURSE AND WALKED BACK INTO SALON. IT WAS OBSERVED THAT THROUGHOUT DINNER NO ONE AT HEAD TABLE SPOKE A WORD TO ANYONE ELSE. KING LINGERED IN SALON FOR SOME TEN MINUTES WHILE ARAB COFFEE WAS SERVED, AFTER WHICH KING AND HIS GUESTS OF HONOR DEPARTED FOLLOWED BY REST OF ASSEMBLAGE.

3. AT FRENCH NATIONAL DAY PARTY AFTERWARDS I COMPARED NOTES  
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WITH SWISS AND TURKISH AMBASSADORS AND WITH MANAGER OF DUTCH BANK HERE

WHO IS ALSO DUTCH CONSUL. ALL WERE INDIGNANT AT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, PARTICULARLY DUTCH CONSUL SINCE SAQQAF HAD CALLED HIM PERSONALLY IN LATER PART OF AFTERNOON URGING HIM TO ATTEND. NONE OF US HAD ANY IDEA ARAFAT WAS TO BE THERE. SWISS IS FEARFUL OF CRITICISM FROM HIS GOVT FOR HAVING STAYED AT AFFAIR. ADMITTED TO HIM SOME MISGIVINGS ON MY OWN PART, BUT WE CON- CLUDED PROBABLY WE HAD DONE ONLY THING POSSIBLE RATHER THAN TURN ON HEELS IN MANNER THAT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN NOTICED BY KING PERSONALLY, SHEIKH ISSA, AND OTHERS IN RETINUE.

4. HOWEVER, IN AFTERMATCH WE SHOULD NOT LET INCIDENT PASS UNNOTICED. FACT THAT NO ONE KNEW IN ADVANCE ARAFAT WAS TO BE

PRESENT SMACKS OF TRICK OR INCREDIBLE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATION. (I AM INCLINED SUSPECT SAQQAF. WHEN I CALLED ON HIM LAST WEEK TO DISCUSS KHALATBARI VISIT, HE FOUND OPPORTUNITY GET OFF HIS USUAL BITTER COMMENTS ABOUT US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AND REMARKS INDICATING USG HAD BEST PAY ATTENTION TO VIEW POINT OF HIMSELF AND KING. "RATHER THAN ANYONE ELSE YOU MAY BE SEEING IN GOVT.")

5. ACCORDINGLY, IF DEPT CONCURS, I PLAN CALL ON DEPUTY FONMINISTER MAS'UD AT FIRST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY, POINT OUT TO HIM MOST EMPHATICALLY THAT I AM COMING TO HIM ON INSTRUCTIONS TO SAY THAT WE BELIEVE A BREACH OF COURTESY WAS COMMITTED AT KING'S DINNER FOR SHEIKH ISSA. AMBASSADORS TO HOST COUNTRY HAVE ALWAYS, OF COURSE, IMPORTANT OBLIGATION BE PRESENT ON ANY OCCASION WHEN THEIR PRESENCE IS REQUIRED BY CHIEF OF STATE. AT SAME TIME, AMBASSADORS HAVE RIGHT TRANSMIT EXPLANATION TO CHIEF OF STATE IF THEY CAN FORESEE IN ADVANCE THAT THEIR ATTENDANCE WOULD PUT THEM IN DIFFICULT OR EMBARRASSING CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THIS CASE FONMINISTRY CLEARLY HAD OBLIGATION NOTIFY US IN ADVANCE OF ARFAT'S PRESENCE, SINCE IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION DINNER ONLY IN HONOR OF BAHRAIN RULER AND WE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY PRESENCE OF ANOTHER GUEST OF HONOR UNACCEPTABLE TO US. IF NECESSARY WOULD REPEAT TO MAS'UD PRECISELY WHY WE CONTINUE HAVE DEEP SUSPICIONS RE ARAFAT. (TRADITIONAL SAUDI POSITION IS, OF COURSE, THAT HE REPRESENTS PALESTINIAN "MODERATES" AS AGAINST OTHER COMMUNIST-LINING PALESTINIAN GROUPS.) HAD I KNOWN ARAFAT WAS TO BE HONORED ALONG WITH SHEIKH ISSA, I WOULD HAVE SENT MESSAGE

TO KING REQUESTING HIS KIND PERMISSION TO BE  
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EXCUSED. WE WISH TM DTHI #  
FONMINISTRY'S ATTENTION, THEREFORE  
WHAT WE CONSIDER TO BE SERIOUS ERROR IN HOW HANDLED MATTER.  
(WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S CONFIRMATION THAT ANALYSIS OF COURTESY ISSUE  
S GIVEN ABOVE IS CORRECT).

6. BELIEVE IT BEST TO TALK TO MAS'UD RATHER THAN SAQQAF AS LATTER  
HAS BECOME SO VERY BITTER, ALMOST IRRATIONAL ON ANYTHING  
RELATED TO ARAB-ISRAEL AFFAIRS.

7. IN SUM, WE WANT SAUDIS TO BE UNMISTAKENLY CLEAR THAT WE OBJECT  
STRONGLY TO WAY MATTER WAS HANDLED IN TERMS OF COURTESY AND  
PROTOCOL ENTIRELY ASIDE FROM ANY POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. INTEND  
AVOID IF POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, ENGAGING AGAIN IN LONG PROBABLY  
FRUITLESS DISCUSSION ABOUT WHICH PALESTINIANS RESPONSIBLE  
FOR WHAT REGARDING KHARTOUM TRAGEDY, ISRAELI RAID ON BEIRUT, ETC.

8. I WOULD PLAN INFORM SWISS AMB AND BELGIAN CHARGE  
OF WHAT I HAVE DONE.

9. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S VIEWS SOONEST.  
THACHER

NOTE BY OC/T: JIDDA 2945 PARA 5 GARBLED TEXT AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION  
TO FOLLOW

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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AMMAN  
BEIRUT  
CAIRO  
KHARTOUM  
KUWAIT  
LONDON

MANAMA  
SANAA  
TEHRAN  
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